

# THE CHURCHES

The Doom of a Nation.  
The International Sunday School Lesson for September 4 is "Two Parables of Judgment," Matt. 21:33-46.

BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.

**B**EFORE typesetting machines became common in newspaper offices, it was the practice of some compositors to keep standing certain common lines and phrases. They knew that so stereotyped is human speech that they could insert these lines bodily with some saving of time and labor. I have thought of these compositors often when attending some religious meetings. For these seemed made up of left over shop worn phrases. The freshness and life have gone out of them. They have all unwittingly become that odious thing, cant.

Religion has a tendency to run to words. Certain stock phrases become common. Glibness in conventional speech is a light upon religious life. It was the same fatal facility in stereotyped phraseology that afflicted the active members of the Jewish church, and gave them the parable which the Sunday schools are now to study. The story of the two sons is a story of life service versus life service. The first son was told by his father to go to work in the vineyard, but refused. Afterward he repented and went. The second son with promptness and politeness said, "I go sir"—but went not.

**Pious Verbosity.**  
The auditors of the parable praised the first son—until the Teacher pointed out that the second son represented their own case. They had been wonderfully proficient in professions; never had religious phraseology been more luxurious than with them. But, lo, all the while they had been making this pious verbosity a test of ecclesiastical standing the publicans and the prostitutes had been going into the kingdom of heaven by the back door. What a shattering blow to self-complacency!

The shock was meant to be wholesome. What if somebody should arise in prayer meeting and interrupt everyone who used carelessly the sublime phrases of Christian devotion with the challenge, "Do you mean that?" Would not the effort be as beneficial as it would be startling? We are very careless in the use of speech in this western world. We are quite as much drawn as those old Pharisees of putting words in the place of works. We are fond of taking religious pledges, and repeating solemn consecrations and lifting our hands in vows, and renewing vows. The peril that always awaits the glib and the stereotyped and conventional, of putting the form in the place of the reality, of putting the form before the feet. The danger of becoming like the second son in the parable is a real one.

A story was told the other day of a South Carolina Scotchman who was an austere and reserved man. One of his descendants says that the only word of endearment he ever heard was to utter concerning his wife was on his death bed when he commended her to the care of his adult sons in the words, "Margaret is a good woman, and I like her." We smile at the meagerness and caution of the utterance, but remembering that they had been preceded by a life of consistent devotion, are not the simple phrases more beautiful than the tropical ardor of the passages commonly read from letters in the divorce courts? Let us be a little slower to speak of great words, and a great deal more heedful in insuring reality behind them. It is not "The most beautiful prayer ever addressed to a Boston audience," that moves God, but the sincere cry of an honest heart.

**A Dire Warning.**  
Kipling describes the modern thought which substitutes for our fire brands, "the yelp of an addled egg." Far worse than this tendency to make man of jellyfish origin is that which if one may speak plainly without reverence—would give to the universe a jellyfish God, without character or convictions, and easily to be placated and cajoled with cheap and sugary phrases. The teaching of Jesus that God is love is a strong and noble and divine conception; a popular perversion, and not the simple phrase, the Deity of all his divine attributes and makes him a characterless creature of man's vagrant will, is debasing and dangerous to the last degree. It needs to be met with such terrific parables of warnings as Jesus spoke to the self-satisfied Jews of his day.

A story is often the best form of argument. So Jesus depicted the whole history of the Chosen People in the

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parable of the householder who, after making ready his vineyard, let it to certain husbandmen. But, when he sent to receive his rental of the crops the husbandmen beat the servants, and otherwise treated them, even to death. A second deputation of servants received like treatment. Then, confident of the respect that his own son's person would receive, he sent him. Then the wicked husbandmen crowned all by murdering the son, hoping thereby to secure the property of the vineyard.

The graphic story ended with the question, "What will he do unto those husbandmen?" Quick came the answer from the interested hearers, moved by a Hebrew sense of justice and of the sacredness of property rights, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season." Then upon their startled and incredulous ears fell the application of the parable.

**When a Nation Is Rejected.**  
The imagination of the race has been gripped by the story of the hand-writing on the wall, and the nation. So also by the similar case of the Jews. "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." boldly declared Jesus in the teeth of the Pharisees, as his application of the parable of the husbandmen. History has written that lesson large. The peculiar function of the Hebrew race has been lost. It no longer is the conservator and disseminator of the truth of monotheism. It has ceased to be at all a missionary religion. The lament of the rabbis, in which all thoughtful Christians join, is that the young men are slipping away from the faith of their fathers. The Jews in New York City alone who never attend synagogues, or who openly avow their indifference to all religion number the tens of thousands.

The dire thought of national rejection has entered the minds of many American and British Christians. England today may be said to be in a state of self-examination. She is asking herself if the accepters of world leadership, and of religious liberty, is to pass from her hands. Other nations have their "Rebels" written over their gates. The glory has departed from Rome and Greece and Turkey and Spain. What of Britain and the United States? At present they are the spiritual pioneers among nations. In no spirit of boastfulness it may be recognized that they have been a chosen people, a dear and dearer of the world's blindness, materialism and mere lip service of the ideals which once ruled their hearts may rob them of their mission as truly as ever Israel was deprived of her peculiar place among the peoples of earth.

For God is just. He deals with nations as with individuals. Spiritual excellence is not an entitled inheritance. Each generation must tend its own altar fires. Each must know God for itself. The repetition of ancient formulas and shibboleths, but by vital, loyal service, in the forms of the present. Happy is that nation whose thoughts of God and service of God, are couched in the terms of the living now.

**More Than a Hero.**  
Terse Comments for September 4  
"Christ Our Savior," John 3:16-21.

BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.

Art has always laid its best work at the feet of Jesus. Music has soared to its sublime heights when it speaks of him. Literature for nearly twenty centuries has concerned itself with him; and the attributes to his beauty and excellence are constantly multiplying. History has been shaped about his feet. None the less, it is not as the Hero of History, the Desire of Literature, the Theme of Music, or the subject of Art that Jesus gets his greatest glory. While it is true that he has laid his sovereign hand upon all the arts and sciences, yet it is not as the conqueror of the broken chariots and sin stained hearts of humanity that Christ is best beloved on earth and in heaven. The world needs heroes; but far more it needs a Savior. No beautiful tributes to the character and philosophy of Jesus can take the place of simple, humble acceptance of him as the only Savior from sin.

The Buddhist does good works in order to be saved. The Christian does good works because he has been saved. They who praise Jesus, while denying him saving power, would crucify him while they crucify him. Man-kind is not interested in Jesus merely as a beautiful historical character, it loves him, and follows him because he alone offers salvation from the terrible fall of sin.

It is a firm foundation on which the Christian has built his faith. There is naught in heaven or on earth so stable as the Rock on which rests the hope of the believer. For our trust is not in the great and supreme Lord, whose word cannot fail and whose goodness is from everlasting to everlasting.

When we walk with Christ all of life's paths are ways of pleasantness and peace.

Christ came as a conqueror. Against the gates of death, which had prevailed over all men, he rode as God's warrior, and forever vanquished them. The old enemy, death, whose very name has been for ages the dread of all men, has been subdued by Christ. To effect this victory was part of his mission on earth, and in the great conquest he has made we share. Christ overcame death itself so that the fear of death might no longer disturb his brethren.

God's best manifestation of himself is Jesus Christ. It is Christ who reveals more fully than he has done in the life of his Son. The purpose of Christ's coming to earth was to show us the Father.

Someone has said that Christ has declared himself to be the "I AM," and has left a blank that may be filled in by any word that expresses the fulfillment of a human need. He came to be all things to us. He is in a deep true sense, the light of the world. He is the world's life and its salvation. In him is peace, power and joy. He is "all in all."

The lifting up of Christ lifts up the world. The elevation of humanity depends upon the exaltation of the cross.

Christianity alone satisfies. No other religion does. Peace on earth is impossible until all accept the Christian. Every other religious system leaves

longings unmet, desires unsatisfied, and so, in a vain outreaching for the coveted mystery, men who have not heard of Christ erect altars "to the unknown God." There is nothing more pathetic in the heathen world than the vague and deep yearning after something which it does not possess. The need can be satisfied only in Jesus Christ.

The lifting up of Christ means the sure lifting up of mankind. Wherever honor is given to him, there men rise into something of his likeness. His glory is inseparable from the good of humanity.

As the tree gets its life from the soil and atmosphere, so the believer should draw his life from Jesus Christ.

The trustworthiness of men is but the reflection of Christ's gospel in their life. We trust men every day, yet no man is sure. It is possible for the strongest man to fail. Jesus alone is infallible and unchanging. We may yet rest confident upon him, for he is the Rock of Ages.

Our strength is only in Christ's strength.

**SEVEN SENTENCE SERMONS.**  
To be good and disagreeable is high treason against virtue.—Anon.

Work is not man's punishment, it is his reward and his strength; his glory and his pleasure.—George Sand.

For life, with all it yields of joy and hope, is but a chance of the prize of learning love.—

How few men have, bath been, indeed, and is.—Robert Browning.

The world will soon forget its masters, but will cling with loving remembrance to its servants.—L. T. Sweeney.

Every duty which is bidden to wait returns with seven fresh duties at its back.—C. Kingsley.

In Faith and Hope the world will disagree. But all mankind's concern is charity.—Pope.

Men remain the same slaves they have always been, and always will be, while they continue to be guided, not by religious consciousness, but by passion.—

**THE PEOPLE'S PULPIT**  
Immortal Worms  
and  
Unquenchable Fire

Sermon by  
CHARLES T. RUSSELL,  
Pastor Brooklyn

"Where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." (Mark ix, 44.)

**T**HESE words from the lips of our Master, the Great Teacher, have been grievously misunderstood. The teaching of our Protestant churches has been made to the effect that only the saintly elect would go to heaven and that others would not only lose heaven, but gain an eternal life in torment. Thus our text was understood to portray what practically the whole world of mankind would be compelled to endure. This hell was pictured to our childhood minds from outside the Bible as heated to a white heat. If we expressed wonder or surprise that any human creature could endure such conditions so long the answer was that God would exercise his omnipotent power to make us fireproof and pain sensitive. Some theologians of the Thomas a Kempis school of thought went so far as to picture the poor creatures in their sufferings and to show that the heat would form a kind of an asbestos covering which would shield them from a measure of its intensity. But those deluded theologians proceeded to explain that these outer coverings would crack and shell off every little while, leaving the poor victim freshly tender that his suffering might be the more intense.

Of course, these theologians of the past had their difficulty in dealing with the worms. They could imagine devils who would oversee the torture as being immune to pain by the chief torturer, the Almighty God. But just how to torture the worms getting along in so great a heat and how they would in any wise increase the torture of the poor sufferers was to many a perplexed problem. But patient thoughtfulness along these cruel and devilish lines enabled some to formulate the theory that the worms would be fiery ones, living in the flames, and that the heat would add still further to the horrible suffering of the world of mankind.

Was this what Jesus meant? Did the Great Teacher intend that such conclusions should be drawn

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sions, theories and external influences.—Tolstol.

**NEWS AND NOTES.**

The centennial of the founding of the first Sunday school in New York City was observed on July 26th by Gypsy Smith, the well known evangelist, has been suffering from a serious illness, but he has so far recovered as to consider resuming his evangelistic work this autumn.

A manuscript, identified as The Odes and Psalms of Solomon, has recently been unearthed near the Tigris river and is considered a discovery of great importance.

South Africa will be represented at Princeton Seminary this fall by four women physicians, Dr. Mary Eddy, born in the Ottoman empire with its \$5,000,000 of people there is but one woman physician, Dr. Mary Eddy, born on the soil of missionary parentage, and who has been licensed by the Sultan to practice in his domain.

An Indiana pastor, wishing to solve the problem of holding the young men in a rural community, has himself taken a course in scientific agriculture, and is now teaching the secrets of soil culture, in addition to his usual duties.

"Municipal Church" is a proposition advanced by Dr. Washington Gladden. This would make a local church including all Protestant denominations. In the field of social philanthropy, of relief and prevention of poverty and disease, and cure of the sick, joint activity is urged.

According to Dr. Arthur Brown, one of the signs of China's awakening is shown in the use of the radio and in the practice of the principles of Western philanthropies. He says: "The Chinese who invented the art of printing by movable type five hundred years ago, have now adopted the radio, and are freely using the improved methods of Western nations. These native presses are seriously affecting our mission press in China, and therefore, upon the Commercial Press, Limited, of Shanghai. This press was started twelve years ago by Christian Chinese who had learned the trade in America, and were now in America, today this press is the largest in all Asia, employing over 1,000 hands. It is equipped with the latest and best German and American machinery. It is managed on the co-operative plan, sharing profits with its employees. The net profits are divided into two parts: five per cent are distributed among the employees, ten go to the shareholders, three to the reserve fund and two to the schools of children of the employees, and the widows and orphans of those who have died. It is gratifying to know not only that the managers are Christians, but that the Christian men, but that 60 per cent of the men who are in responsible positions are Christians. This press now issues most of the text books used in Shanghai, and the Chinese proportion of the bank notes which are in circulation."

**A Valley Outside Jerusalem.**  
I wish that those of you who have modern Bibles with maps at the back would turn to the map of the city of Jerusalem and there notice on the southwest side of the city, just outside the wall, the Valley of Hinnom. That is the valley that in brief was called Gehenna, the Greek of which is gehenna. All of our Lord's uses of the word gehenna stand related to that valley. For the sake of your better understanding, I will in brief tell you to have a glance backward at the history of that valley during many centuries before Jesus' day.

The first mention of this valley in the Bible is found in Joshua xv, 8, where it is given as one of the boundaries of the tribe of Judah, according to the lot cast by Joshua. The division of the land that had come into possession of the Israelites. It is again mentioned similarly in Joshua xviii, 16. The next reference to the valley is found in II Kings xxiii, 10. There we read of how Josiah, the good King of Judah, instituted a great reformation in the nation and abolished idolatry in the most heinous forms the idolatry having been practiced in this valley of Hinnom, which had gotten a new name, namely Tophet. Here was added to the valley the great image of the heathen god Moloch. In various places they had groves in which licentious forms of worship was enacted and then they resorted to this valley of Hinnom to confer sacrifice of a most revolting kind.

There is a story and sometimes it was a girl that was placed naked in the arms of the great image after it had been fired to a red heat with wood and brush. The image, and passing through it as a flue. The cries of these infants so horribly sacrificed were drowned by the cheer of the worshippers. All of this, indeed everything akin to suffering, was strictly forbidden by the Divine law given to Israel. They had been specially warned against this very form of idolatry (Leviticus xviii, 21; Deuteronomy xviii, 10). It is a gross mistake and slander to suppose that the Jews were ever permitted that it ever sanctioned torture. And it is still worse slander upon God to suppose that he would himself sanction such for all eternity, what he condemned in his fallen creatures.

The Lord declares all this through the Prophet Jeremiah (xvii, 1-13). He declares particularly forewarned the Israelites that their wrong course would eventually in the terrible time of trouble which came upon Jerusalem in the year A. D. 70, when it was estimated that over a million died at the siege of Jerusalem. In fulfillment of this prophecy the Jews came to their knees over the wall of Jerusalem and cried, "Behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the Valley of the son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they shall bury in Tophet till there is no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth."

After the reformation made by King Josiah the Valley of Hinnom was dedicated to the intent that it might never afterward be considered fit for any kind of religious worship, sacrifice or ceremony. It was used at certain times for the burning of the offal and rubbish of the city. It became the dumping place of dead cats and dogs.

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**Entering Into Life.**  
Let us go back to Jesus' day and in mind place ourselves with those who heard him utter the words of our text and context. The Teacher had just said, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off—it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." He said the same in the following verses respecting the foot and the eye. Was he speaking generally or figuratively? Does any sane person suppose today that Jesus advised a literal cutting off of a hand or a foot or the plucking out of an eye? Assuredly not. And the person who would follow his counsel in that way would be considered unbalanced in mind. We all recognize what he did mean, namely,

that if any who desired to have eternal life found that they had hindrance of appetite or pleasure or what not, as dear to them as an eye, foot, hand, these precious, but disqualifying sins or wrong doings, should be put away—no matter how precious they were—no matter how highly esteemed. By way of contrast, the Master suggested that if the retaining of these things would hinder them from entering into life they could not afford to retain them. Therefore, if they would enter the figure further and suppose that in the future life they would be deprived to the extent of being maimed to all eternal life, it would be preferable to them to practice the self-denial now and to enter into life.

Be it noted that the reward here indicated is in the entering into life, and the intimation is that those who will not have life at all—that they will fail to attain life; that they will have eternal life, either in pain or in pleasure. Let us examine our text further and see this.

**Gehenna Typed the Second Death.**  
The word hell in our text is from the Greek word gehenna, which, in turn, was a corruption of the Hebrew word gehinnon, which signifies valley of death. There are two other valleys in the New Testament Greek translated hell in our common version. One of these, tartarus, has no reference to humanity whatever, but merely signifies the earth's surface, the place where Satan and the fallen angels are restrained in chains of darkness (II Peter ii, 4). The other Greek word translated hell in the New Testament is hades, which corresponds exactly to the word rendered hell in the Old Testament, namely sheol. And all scholars know that both of these words signify the same thing. They are used interchangeably in the Scriptures to designate the state or condition of death.

It is a mistake, however, and why, as pastors, they have kept the sheep of their flock in the dark on the subject is for them to explain. They certainly cannot please themselves in any manner they can apologize that they hoped that the misunderstanding would do more good than the truth. They seem to forget entirely that this terrible misunderstanding is not only wrecking the faith of thousands, but dishonoring our Creator—blaspheming his holy name, his holy character, by misrepresenting it and the Divine plan.


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